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JCS PASS J-5/CDR S. WRIGHT

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: OPRC KMDR TU

SUBJECT: ANKARA MEDIA REACTION REPORT
THURSDAY, JANUARY 26, 2006

THIS REPORT PRESENTS THE TURKISH PRESS SUMMARY UNDER THREE THEMES:

HEADLINES
BRIEFING
EDITORIAL OPINION

Thursday, January 26, 2006
HEADLINES

MASS APPEAL
US Rejects Alpogan's Request to Hand Over PKK Ringleaders - Hurriyet
Straw: Turkey's Cyprus Action Plan Important - Milliyet
Straw the First Western Minister to Meet Talat in Turkish Cyprus - Hurriyet
Greek Cypriots Protest Straw for Visiting North Cyprus - Milliyet
Rehn: EU Accession Talks with Turkey May Start in Spring - Hurriyet
UNSC to Convene to Discuss Iran - Sabah
Iran to Safeguard Nuclear Facilities Underground - Milliyet
HAMAS Won't Recognize Israel, Abandon Weapons - Sabah
'Survival Map' for Illegal Mexican Immigrants - Hurriyet

OPINION MAKERS
MacCormack: Turkey's Cyprus Action Plan a Welcome Step Forward - Cumhuriyet
Straw: Turkey's Cyprus Plan Deserves to be Taken Seriously - Yeni Safak
Congressmen Wexler, Whitfield Laud Turkey's Cyprus Action Plan - Radikal
Alpogan Urges US to Support Turkey's Cyprus Plan - Radikal
Tehran Open to Enriching Uranium in Russia - Cumhuriyet
HAMAS Takes the Stage, Enters Palestine Parliament Strong -

Radikal

Olmert Signals Changes in Post-Sharon Era - Radikal
2 Million Iraqi Families Survive on 1 USD a Day - Yeni Safak
US Troops Kill 3 Civilians in Ramadi - Yeni Safak
1.4 Million Cubans Protest against US in Havana - Radikal
US Develops Nuclear Detector - Radikal

BRIEFING

Turkey Announces Action Plan on Cyprus: On Wednesday, Foreign Minister Abdullah Gul announced a Turkish Action Plan for Cyprus, which was submitted to UN Secretary General Kofi Annan on January 20, Turkish papers report. The Turkish plan says that Greek Cypriot vessels will be given access to Turkish ports and airports within the framework of EU customs unions, and suggests that direct international flights will be allowed to and from the Ercan airport in Girne (Kyrenia) in the north. It asks for removal of trade restrictions by both sides, and of international sanctions against the Turkish side. The plan calls for special arrangements for inclusion of Turkish Cyprus, as an economic entity, into the EU customs union. FM Gul offered to hold a meeting in May or June for Turkey, Greece, and both Cypriot sides in Cyprus under the auspices of UN Secretary General Annan. The plan aims at introducing a perspective for a lasting settlement in Cyprus, and to pave the way for cooperation and mutual trust in Cyprus, Gul said. 'The UN Secretary-General is kindly invited to consider the plan and

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take the lead, and we call on the international community to examine and support this proposal,' he added. Gul also stressed he was confident the plan presented an opportunity to help stabilize the eastern Mediterranean region, provide

ANKARA 00000297 002 OF 005

economic benefits for all, and integrate the Turkish Cypriots with the rest of the world, 'which has been a goal of the international community, including the EU, since mid-2004.' Meanwhile, visiting British Foreign Secretary Jack Straw will be received by PM Erdogan and later hold a joint press conference with Foreign Minister Abdullah Gul in Ankara on Thursday. Before traveling to Turkey, Straw paid a visit yesterday first to Nicosia and then to the Turkish part of the city, meeting with leaders on both sides. In a news conference in the buffer zone after wrapping up talks, Straw stressed that his visit should be evaluated under the good-offices mission of Secretary General Annan. Straw has stressed that his calling on the Turkish Cypriot leader Mehmet Ali Talat at his office in the north did not mean an 'upgrade' the in political status of the 'TRNC.'

Wexler, Whitfield Praise Turkey's Cyprus Action Plan: US Congressmen Robert Wexler (D) and an Ed Whitfield (D) praised the new Cyprus initiative launched by the Turkish government, papers report. Wexler and Whitfield, members of the US-Turkey Friendship Group, called for an end to the international isolation of Turkish Cypriots. 'The Cyprus action plan, made public by the Turkish government, is a constructive effort, aiming to make progress in the ongoing Cyprus problem,' the Congressmen said in a statement. Whitfield said the action plan was a 'good-will initiative,' and stated that it will contribute to economic development and stability of the island. Wexler expressed hope that the Greek Cypriot administration would respond to this call immediately, and that talks would resume under the auspices of the UN. Wexler also stressed that Turkey, Greece and the two communities in Cyprus had seized an extraordinary opportunity to work for regional peace, democracy and prosperity under the plan proposed by Turkey.

Alpogan Seeks Support on PKK, Cyprus in Washington: During his meetings in Washington earlier this week, Turkish National Security Council (NSC) Secretary-General Yigit Alpogan urged the Americans to hand over the leaders of the

outlawed PKK organization in northern Iraq, papers report. Alpogan said in a speech he delivered on Tuesday at the Washington Institute that such forward steps would help in restoring the image of the US in the view of Turks. A source told "Milliyet" that the US had declined to make any commitments regarding the fight against the PKK. The Iraqi Kurds continue efforts to change the demographic structure of Kirkuk, Alpogan said, proposing a change in the constitution regarding the future of the city or else a four-year delay of the referendum due to be held in 2007. He also warned that inclusion of Kirkuk in the region controlled by the Kurds will lead to big problems in Iraq. A high-ranking military officer told "Radikal" that the Turkish military views the PKK issue from a standpoint of separatism rather than of terrorism. 'Things in Iraq are not going the way the US wants, and we are worried about separatism in Iraq. We need a political strategy to deal with the problem -- not just a military one,' the source said. Alpogan said that Syria should not be completely isolated in the international arena. Alpogan noted that Foreign Minister Gul has proposed to Syria that they try five Syrian suspects in Turkey in connection with the assassination of former Lebanese PM Hariri. Alpogan also requested US support for Turkey's new action plan on Cyprus. An unidentified US official who attended the Alpogan's meeting with Secretary Rice is quoted by "Milliyet" as saying that Turkey and the US shared the same views with regard to the nuclear program of Iran. "Cumhuriyet" reports that Alpogan submitted a report to the US which said that Iranian missiles posed a threat to Turkey, adding that

ANKARA 00000297 003 OF 005

Turkey urgently needed a missile defense system. Alpogan outlined Turkish conditions for supporting a possible military operation against Iran, emphasizing that Turkey will extend only intelligence and logistic support to the US in a possible operation against Iran. 'There have been good relations between Turkey and Iran for a long time. However, we do not want Iran to have nuclear weapons. We support efforts to find a solution to the problem through diplomatic means,' Alpogan emphasized. Alpogan's meetings in the US had been a response to the recent visits of CIA and FBI Directors to Turkey, says "Cumhuriyet."

USTR Donnelly Visits Ankara: Assistant US Trade Representative for Europe and the Mediterranean, Shaun Donnelly, said that the US wishes to increase trade with Turkey, which is currently 10 billion USD, Turkish papers reported on Wednesday. Donnelly, heading the US delegation in a meeting of the Turkey-US Trade and Investment Framework Agreement (TIFA) Council, stressed that, with the TIFA meeting, commercial obstacles have been removed and an important step made to promote investments in both countries. 'We plan to develop joint projects and make investments with Turkey in the Caucasus, Central Asia and Middle East,' said Donnelly. Donnelly pointed out that General Electrics (GE) has purchased shares of Turkish Garanti Bank. 'Other major US corporations will also invest in Turkey soon,' Donnelly noted. Turkish State Minister Kursad Tuzmen noted that there is no joint economic commission between Turkey and the US other than TIFA. 'This meeting convened after three years, and is important from the perspective of developing commercial ties,' Tuzmen said. Tuzmen said the issue of Qualified Industrial Zones was also raised at the meeting. 'We want to include textiles and ready made garments in such zones,' he added.

US Bird Flu Team Tours Turkey's Eastern Provinces: 'We are impressed by the program carried out by Turkey to contain bird flu,' said Ann Derse, a senior official from the US State Department heading the US bird flu team to the eastern cities of Erzurum and Van over the weekend, Turkish papers reported earlier this week. The US delegation, comprised of a senior infectious diseases adviser with USAID and other experts on animal and human health, toured affected areas in Turkey to assess what help the United States can provide,

ended their meetings on Sunday and departed for Baku from Van. Derse told the press before departure that they were briefed by the local officials in both provinces on the efforts to contain the disease. Derse said that bird flu was a global problem and it needed a global solution. She praised Turkey's transparency and thanked Turkish officials for their cooperation. Other team members said they were impressed by the professional steps and methods taken by Turkey when compared to other countries which have the disease. On Sunday, the US team visited the university hospital in Van where four children had died of the deadly H5N1 strain of bird flu. The chief physician of the hospital said they asked the US team to help to establish a modern laboratory in the region. Meanwhile, "Zaman" reports Thursday that Turkey's efforts to combat bird flu are yielding results. Tour operators said that if tourist reservations continue at the present pace, Turkey will achieve its 2006 targets.

Military Source: AKP Government Slow in Fighting Separatism:
An unidentified senior Turkish military source told "Radikal" that the military does not mind who becomes the next president, provided he respects the constitution. The source said the ruling AK Party government is too slow in fighting separatism, and needs to formulate a clear policy.

ANKARA 00000297 004 OF 005

'Like many other circles in Turkey, the military is concerned about the favoritism shown for, for example, the graduates of theology high-schools. We convey to the government our views through legal channels. The possibility of a military takeover in Turkey is out of the question,' the source said.

Erdogan to Attend World Economic Forum Meetings in Davos:
Prime Minister Tayyip Erdogan will travel to Davos, Switzerland on Thursday to attend the World Economic Forum meetings. Erdogan will be received by the Swiss, Pakistani, Afghani, and Georgian presidents, meet with Kofi Annan and German Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier, and also participate in a meeting on 'enlarging the borders of Europe' during his stay in Davos, papers report.

Mixed Prayer Draws Islamic Reformation Comments in Turkey:
Turkish papers reported earlier this week that the wife of Cuneyd Zapsu, a close advisor to PM Erdogan, has been attending a mosque where women do not cover their heads and pray side-by-side with men. Left-leaning "Cumhuriyet," and mainstream dailies describe the reformist Islam group as a form of 'Islamic Calvinism.' "Sabah" reports that the movement has its roots in the US. The fundamentalist daily "Vakit" speculates that this could be an attempt by the US to 'degenerate' Islam in Turkey. "Hurriyet" says under the headline 'Protestant Turks' that a group of people in central Turkey launched a reform movement in Islam like the 16th century reformation movement in Christianity. "Cumhuriyet" and some other mainstream papers claim that 'mixed prayer' is causing trouble in the ruling AK Party. The AKP is split over whether women should be allowed to pray alongside men in mosques without headscarves, say papers.

EDITORIAL OPINION: Palestine Elections; Iran

"A Difficult Election"
Sami Kohen commented in the mainstream "Milliyet" (1/25): "This time the Palestinian elections have a potential to create an impact on both the fate of the Palestinian people and the future of Israel-Palestine peace. The popular support evident in election results for Hamas, which is known for its attacks against Israel and radical Islamist tendencies, stemmed from its social programs to end unemployment and poverty. This approach helped Hamas gain political support. Some people who voted in favor of Hamas and against Al Fatah are not bothered with the radical

religious rhetoric and are more concerned with the settlement of social and economic problems. If Hamas finds itself as a coalition partner with Al Fatah, it will have to choose between politics and violence."

"Iran and Beyond"

Namik Kemal Zeybek argued in the conservative "Tercuman" (1/26): "The main reason Iran has become a target stems from its resistance against being a part of the global capitalistic system. Iran continues to resist allowing its natural resources to fall into the hands of global markets. The ongoing nuclear power dispute is just a pretext for international players to manipulate Turkish opinion about the activities against Iran. Unfortunately these players are backed by influential media and other figures in Turkey. On the issue of nuclear weapons, the rhetoric against Iran does not reflect the actual truth as there is no proof that Iran is going to produce nuclear weapons. A State Department spokesman recently said that he believes Turkey is worried about Iran's nuclear weapons program. This is

ANKARA 00000297 005 OF 005

not the first time we have read or heard similar rhetoric against Iran. The question to ask is: Why was there no objection when Israel possessed nuclear weapons? Who actually used its nuclear power against Japan? Who is actually becoming more dangerous?"

"Iran's Position"

Yilmaz Oztuna wrote in the conservative-nationalist "Turkiye" (1/26): "Iran wants to be a leading country in the Middle East and believes that a leading country should have the atomic bomb. The US insists on being the corrector of mistakes, as well as a leader, organizer, fighter against terrorism, and the distributor for the Middle Eastern oil resources. The US supports its plan by establishing strong military bases. With its new regime, Iran doesn't present a model for the Middle East. Other than Turkey, achieving democracy in this region may not be impossible, but it is definitely a slowly developing process. Moreover, neither Turkey which controlled this region for centuries, nor Egypt which stands for the Arab leadership position, would agree with Iran's superiority. Iran, in order to eliminate isolation, may try to spread its ideology to Turkey, Lebanon, Palestine, Southern Iraq, the Caucasus, the Turkic Republics and to the Balkans. An Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman announced a few days ago that Iran is ready to share its nuclear power with all Islamic countries and with the Middle East. However, there isn't a single Muslim country ready to accept such an offer from Iran. They will all kindly say "no" to this."

WILSON